

**THE CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY MERCER WIC PROGRAM
RECEIVES THE GOLD LEVEL 2106 LOVING SUPPORT AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

USDA
Administrator
Patricia
Dombroski congratulated the NJ WIC Program in recognition of their leadership which resulted in the awarding of a 2016 Loving Support Award of Excellence to one of their local agencies. The Children's Home Society of New Jersey Mercer WIC



AWARDING WINNERS — The Children's Home Society Mercer WIC staff show off their Gold award. Congratulations to all!

Program was awarded the Gold level 2016 Loving Support Award of Excellence in recognition of their exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support practices. The Gold level award was given to only 15 recipients in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

The Gold level application assessed the effectiveness of the agency's peer counseling program by reviewing their breastfeeding support partnerships within the community, the lactation support provided to WIC mothers and babies, program evaluation techniques, and training and continuing education opportunities for staff.

Children's Home Society Mercer WIC Program excelled in all these areas, and both the local agency and State agency staff are commended for their dedication to fulfilling WIC's mission. Administrator Dombroski wrote, "We recognize that countless hours go into providing peer counseling, support, phone calls, and education which makes WIC's breastfeeding program award winning. The compassion, kind-heartedness and sincerity of the program staff are recognized and appreciated." ■

TWO VIRGINIA WIC PROGRAMS

BRING HOME THE GOLD

By Jarene Fleming, VA State Breastfeeding Coordinator and Natalie Pennywell, VA VDH DCN Community Outreach Coordinator

Virginia's Thomas Jefferson and Virginia Beach WIC programs received a special announcement during World Breastfeeding Week 2016. These WIC programs were awarded the prestigious Loving Support Gold Award. The award was established in 2015 by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to recognize state and local WIC agencies that excel in offering education and support for breastfeeding mothers. Secretary Vilsack proclaimed August 1-7 as National WIC Breastfeeding Week, "in appreciation of breastfeeding mothers and of all the dedicated volunteers, professionals, communities, and organizations that support their efforts."

Secretary Vilsack went on to say "the work being done by WIC programs to empower mothers to breastfeed — addressing societal barriers, enhancing peer counselor programs, building key coalitions, and more is absolutely vital and deserves recognition."

There is no better food than breast milk for a baby's first year of life. Increasing breastfeeding rates can help reduce the prevalence of various illnesses and health conditions, which in turn results in lower health care costs. Thomas Jefferson and Virginia Beach staffers will receive their plaques before an audience of their peers during the Virginia Fall WIC Conference. The state WIC office is proud to congratulate the local agency staff and their outstanding work resulting in this tremendous honor and a beautiful GOLD award! ■



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